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Wartime Letters from Italy

By
Charles Truitt





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CROWN PRINCE UMBERTO AT QUIRINAL LOTTERY

WARTIME · LETTERS FROM · ITALY

By · CHARLES · TRUITT

Author of "A Tale of Two Beaches" - "Georgeanna Banana"
"Sara Maloney's Genius" - "Cinders" - Etc.



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TO MY MOTHER

OFF GIBRALTAR

MAY 24, 1915

Yesterday I said to the Italian steward who serves our table, "Gaetano, do you think we shall find war in Italy?" Gaetano has youth and strength, qualities beloved of kings and generals, so Gaetano's mind dwells much upon the possibility of war. Then, too, in Napoli is Bianca Fortunelli, who will go with him to the priest at San Stefano's in June—if! Assuredly Gaetano was the one to know if war was "in the air."

To-day proved him a prophet. At my question yesterday his manner became grave, like that of an old man who has thought much, and there was no lilt of adventure in his voice as in a mixture of English and Italian, he replied: "Signore, I feel that my beautiful country is entering into much sadness; I feel that the sons and fathers in Italia will die, because in two thousand years mankind has not learned to be contented with prosperity and peace. That which is savage within men still snarls at continued

goodness. We need something that the priests and the doctors of philosophy of all ages have not yet been able to give us. *Si, Signore*, we shall fight; already I see the shadow of war and beneath the shadow the mothers, the sisters, the *bambini*, who cry and are hungry!"

A tenor of the Boston Opera Company felt the same way; here at sea, hundreds of miles from Italy, the shadow of war projected itself. The Americans and the English said: "No, Italy will not fight. Every day Austria will make more concessions and Italy will get what she wants without war—even the provinces which were stolen from her many years ago."

But the tenor, lusty and of fighting age, knew otherwise. The young stewards, the boys who fill wine-bottles, the sailors on the decks and the men deep down in the hold—they could see the mailed fist with the clutching fingers reaching out for their youth, their vitality and happiness, for their lives. Yesterday their Latin gayety was stilled, their voices low, their eyes sad.

The grim and ugly gunboat that came out to

meet us as we approached Gibraltar to-day seemed to have no rightful place in the sun that danced on a peaceful sea. It struck a note of dissonance that even the interest of its appearance to bored passengers could not make less painful. It encircled the ship as if to impress us with its power, then through a megaphone a voice called out to our captain on the bridge, "Will you go into Gibraltar, *please*."

That "please" was mollifying, and the inflexions of the voice made us feel as if we would confer a great favor by granting the request that concealed a demand. We wondered what a Teutonic voice might have called out under like circumstances.

After we dropped anchor, close to the shore, a launch put out from the Old Mole with three officers, courteous in demeanor, who boarded our steamer smilingly, as if intent only upon a social call.

Before we had been allowed to go on the steamer in New York, our passports had to be surrendered to the captain. These the purser

now spread upon a table in the smoking-saloon, ready for inspection by the chief officer of the port. One by one, passengers were questioned by the gentle-voiced young officer in charge of the proceedings. If one answered "yes" to the question, "Were you born in the United States?" the officer carefully compared the passenger's features with his photograph on the passport, and then with a "thank you" turned over that "life saver" to its owner. If one said he had not been born in America, but was naturalized, he first came in for a series of questions in English from the officer in charge and then in the language of his mother country from the two subordinate officers. If the man under interrogation showed nervousness or faltered in replying, he was none too graciously waved to one side, to be examined later. A half-dozen men who were born in Germany and one born in England of Austrian parents were set apart in this way. Before he re-examined these "doubtful" ones, the officer announced that a telegram just received stated that the Germans were shooting

English prisoners. He carefully watched the seven faces for signs of gratification, then said harshly: "The Germans are only animals; I hope to see them exterminated!" Still more closely did he watch the eyes of the men before him for a flash of anger that might indicate them more German than American. Apparently he was satisfied, for he proceeded with his examination of their other papers and then returned the passports. He said later that several Germans with fraudulent passports describing them as natives of neutral countries had on other occasions been betrayed by their angry outbursts at similar remarks.

There was some irregularity in the papers of the man of Austrian parentage and the officer declared he must detain him at Gibraltar. The man's English wife announced that she wished to be imprisoned with her husband. The officer applauded her spirit, but said that most of the 1,800 suspects in Gibraltar had been separated from their wives and that there was no room for her. The husband (wise man) remained silent

while the woman pleaded his cause so convincingly that the officer finally concluded to let him remain on the steamer, thinking possibly that as Italy was at war with Austria, the authorities in Naples would not permit him to proceed to Trieste, his objective point.

For that was the great news the officer brought—from the twenty-fourth of May, Italy would consider herself at war with Austria. The depression of the tenor, the premonitions of Gaetano had been warranted—Italy had truly given herself to war.

At dinner this evening, Jane Noria of the Metropolitan Opera Company placed an Italian flag atop a rosebush on her table. Everyone rose and shouted "*Viva l'Italia!*" And the voices of the men who must fight rang as bravely as if for two hours to-day their eyes had not been forced to look upon the hulk of Britain's "Inflexible," in a compartment of which are locked the bodies of forty-three men who had to be sacrificed that the lives of their fellow sailors might be saved. When the "Inflexible" struck

two mines in the Dardanelles some weeks ago, these men were unable to escape before the doors of the bulkhead slid into place at the touch of a button on the deck above. They were drowned by the water that poured slowly in upon them through the rent made by the exploding mines; and so tightly are the doors of the compartment wedged, that after all these weeks the men who are repairing the battleship have not yet been able to get out the bodies and give them burial.

The glammers of war do not exist for the men of fighting age on board this Italian ship. For nearly a year they have daily read of its realities. They know that they go, not to stirring adventures from which they will return covered with honors and exalted with glory, but to hunger and thirst, toil without recompense, disease, mutilation, and, for many of them, death. The men who fared forth to fight in the early stages of the war had not looked upon illustrations of the dying and the dead; upon photographs of starving women and children, wrecked cathedrals, and skeletons of houses that once were

part of a prosperous village. They went forth in fortunate ignorance. But the men who on Saturday will start for the front will have no illusions. No crash of cymbals, trumpet call or pounding of drums can make war romantic for them—for ten months they have read newspapers and have seen photographs! Besides, over there in Gibraltar forty-three dead bodies float in a dark compartment below the waterline.

A Roumanian, a fear-ridden creature who daily has died many times since we left New York, asked one of the English officers if our ship would be in danger between Gibraltar and Naples, now that Italy, too, is at war.

"We know that no Austrian or German ships are on top of the Mediterranean; we are not sure what prowls beneath it," replied the officer. The Roumanian's eyes grew hard and staring, like glass. At dinner, the steward handed him ten dollars—he had won the pool on the ship's run that day. The Roumanian stared at it dully and whimpered, "I may not live to spend it!" We all winced. It hurt to see one so nakedly

afraid. If the rest of us are dreading Austrian submarines, we are dissembling successfully. Perhaps we have not such visualizing powers as the little Roumanian.

A dozen of our passengers wished to enter Spain by way of Gibraltar, but were not permitted to do so. Even Mr. Charles Payson Pressly, vice-consul at Paris, and provided with a special passport, could not start himself and family for Paris through that gateway. And a Spanish soldier, returning from a leave of absence, must go to Genoa and take there a boat for Barcelona in order to rejoin his regiment in Madrid. Neutral or otherwise, we are all shackled to the war god's chariot in one way or another.

What shall we do in Italy? Will our letters of credit be honored? Shall we be able to get a ship back to the United States if we don't return immediately? Where can we get some American flags? These are a few of the questions asked by passengers who did not believe that Italy would go to war and who now are

wishing themselves back in America. Some of us sailed because we felt that war was inevitable and we would like to see it. Needless to say, we had never lived in a country that was at war.

Some thoughtful friends sent eight American flags to me at the steamer. They now adorn eight patriotic (and somewhat timid) native-born citizens of the United States, who probably never before have been so grateful for being Yankees.

NAPLES BRAVELY CHEERFUL

When the passengers booked for Genoa learned that our ship would remain at Naples for six hours, they naturally wished to go ashore after the twelve days' pacing of decks. Without any inspection of their papers, the officer of the port granted shore leave to all who asked for it. I suppose he assumed that the English examiners at Gibraltar had allowed none but the right persons to proceed as far as Naples. However, it seemed to me a hazardous assumption under the circumstances, for immediately at the dock where the tender landed us was the "America," laden with troops and munitions and preparing to sail in a few hours for a port near the Austrian frontier. It would have been easy for an adherent of Germany or Austria to hurl a bomb from the shore. An Italian passenger said that immediately upon his arrival in Rome he would notify the War Office of the indiscretion of the authorities in permitting passengers from our

ship to roam at will about Naples without having first examined their papers.

Those of us who are remaining here over night, however, were required to deliver our passports to the manager of the hotel and to sign three papers in which we had to give most of our life's history and our purpose in coming to Italy in such troublous times. These papers will have to be approved at police headquarters before we shall be allowed to proceed to Rome to-morrow.

Naples is proverbially light-hearted, and there is as much laughter and song as when I was here six years ago. The boys from Santa Lucia again met the ship and dived for coins. There were the same noisy "runners" from the hotels, each asserting the ease with which he could get prospective clients through the customs. And, unfortunately, there were again many men and women with hideous deformities who always managed to place themselves where one must either fall over them or thrust them unfeelingly aside. But I was relieved to find absent one disagreeable feature of my last landing. Six years

ago, a woman held out to an American doctor and myself a baby whose eyelids were closed by what seemed to be a particularly offensive form of eye disease. Before we landed, the doctor had told me it was the custom of some beggars to paint on their faces and arms simulations of loathsome diseases or wounds. Despite the woman's protests and threats, the doctor took the baby from her arms and examined its eyelids, from which exuded large brown drops. These he found to be of sealing-wax, with which she had tightly closed the infant's eyelids. The doctor demanded that the woman be arrested, and afterwards he wrote a strong letter to the *Società pro Napoli*, whose purpose is the betterment of the city. Apparently the *Società* took action, for the beggars who importuned us this time were only those who through amputations had been rendered unfit to do honest work. The *Società pro Napoli* has done fine work in the past six years in eliminating a certain class of undesirables who used to make landing at Naples a thing to be dreaded, and perhaps some

day this beautiful city will learn that with the right kind of treatment tourists would linger there as long as they now do in other cities of Italy which are not so interesting but which offer a stronger feeling of security.

Italy is proceeding as calmly as if mobilization were a daily custom. There is none of the confusion that existed in France and England at the beginning of the war. Most of the fast trains are running on schedule time, and to-morrow we shall probably be as comfortable on the Rome express as we should be in *tempo normale*. This calmness must be a great disappointment to those passengers who expected to find Italy so demoralized that they would be compelled to walk from Naples to Rome.

ROME—AT THE QUESTURA

A New Englander and myself were the only Americans on the ten o'clock express from Naples, and we soon had evidence that all foreigners in Italy are regarded with suspicion at this time. Nearly all the other passengers in our car were officers *en route* to their regiments in northern Italy. They all took occasion to stand a moment at the door of our compartment and look us over carefully. Several of them asked the conductor what nationality the *stranieri* were. We had thought we looked sufficiently American not to require the additional support of the small flags provided by friends at home and so had not worn them. We purposely raised our voices in talking, and frequently made use of the "guess" and "reckon" which most foreigners regard as indispensable to a Yankee's vocabulary. I "guess" this was convincing, for when we went later into the dining-car we met only the friendliest of glances.

At Caserta we passed a field in which were

forty thousand horses from the United States. An Italian friend has since told me that another forty thousand died on the way over, presumably from having been herded too closely together, and that an investigation is now being conducted to fix the responsibility for so costly a loss.

The New Englander went on to Florence and I paid twelve cents to "taxi" to a small hotel near the Piazza del Popolo. There I again had to fill in and sign forms similar to those required by the police in Naples. Pasted conspicuously on the wall was also a notice that within twenty-four hours of arrival in Rome, all foreigners must present themselves for interrogation at the *Questura* in the *Collegio Romano*. As the notice intimated that a fine of one thousand lire would follow non-compliance within the time specified, I thought myself justified in spending another twelve cents for an immediate drive to the inquisitors of the *Questura*. Within ten minutes I was facing a row of stern-faced men whose duty it was to see that no one hostile to Italy was permitted to remain in Rome. They

were courteous, but quickly made me feel that I was there to prove my honorable intentions. I had taken the precaution to procure a semi-formal certificate of respectability from a judge of the Supreme Court of my State, and had also brought cards of membership in several American associations. All of these were carefully studied.

"Your passport states you a writer," said a bald gentleman who looked like Julius Cæsar. "I hope you are not a journalist," he added, suspiciously. "Because journalists cause a great deal of trouble in war times."

I assured him that I had no connection with any newspaper, but did not add that I wished I had.

"Well," he said finally, "I think you are an honest American, but be careful what you write about, for all your letters will be read by the censor, and if you criticise us adversely we may have to send you home."

I promised to be good and told him that several times I had done everything but murder in

order to spend some months with his delightful countrymen. He laughed, offered me his cigarette case and instructed the clerk to give me a printed "*permesso*" to stay in Rome. He advised me never to go on the street without it in my pocket and to show it willingly to any police or army officer who asked for it.

There is real necessity for carrying this "*permesso*." There have been several assaults on persons who were suspected of being spies, but most of them were in the suburbs of Rome and by ignorant *contadini*, to whom everyone not Italian is an enemy seeking information. A fair-haired Englishwoman who had been married for twenty years to an Italian was hurried to jail at Frascati by an angry mob and kept there for several hours. She was examining a map of the locality in a guide-book, and what would have seemed natural in normal times was in *tempo di guerra* construed by the excited *contadini* as an attempt at spying. Her husband seemed amused at her adventure, but I am told

that she has not yet been able to see the funny side of it.

The day that war was declared, a crowd gathered before the Hotel Savoia and threatened to burn down the place, unless the German manager left Rome. He took the first train northward bound.

I think that if one were bored he could have an interesting but perilous half-hour by simply replying "*Ja*" to any question asked him in a public place. Even on shop windows that bear the sign "English, French and Spanish spoken here" there is a space showing where the word "German" has been cut away or painted out.

Outside of the attachés at the Embassy there are probably not three American men in Rome. In six days I have seen only one, and he has lived here for several years. He hailed me as a fellow-countryman and seemed glad to talk to someone from "home." I noticed that in addition to a small American flag he wore on the lapel of his coat the button of the Sons of the Revolution and a tiny Italian flag. This Ameri-

can said he had a laundress who also did special work in her line for the Austrian embassy and that the day the ambassador left Rome she received a note saying, "Send home the laundry immediately, *wet or dry*."

"Wet or dry!" she laughed. "Believe, *signore*, that I managed to have that *lingerie* very *wet*!"

There are practically none but Italians in Rome. Most of the big hotels that cater to tourists are partially closed, and some of them entirely so, with a sign on the door announcing that they will not re-open until the war is over. The *pensions* are not earning enough to pay their servants.

I have seen but one seller of postcards on the street, and as I meet him every time I leave the hotel, I fancy he regards me as his only prospective customer. In normal times at this season the Piazza di Spagna, Gardens of the Pincio and vicinity of the Forum are noisily alive with the too-persistent sellers of postcards and mosaics.

Rome is usually serious, but the soldiers are

making it as lively as Naples. They are making the most of the time before their call to the front and are as gay as if they faced only a carnival later on. Battle scenes at the "movies" are very popular. Despite the horrible realism of some of them the soldiers in the audience show no signs of apprehension, but, on the contrary, give distinct evidence of their restless desire to get into action.

GOOD-NATURED OFFICERS

At my hotel are thirty-nine soldiers, five of whom are men of title who will serve in the ranks, for which they will receive three cents a day as pay. The thirty-nine are disobeying regulations, which require that while awaiting transportation to the front, all soldiers must sleep in the barracks. The men are accompanied by their families, who came with them to Rome so as to spend every possible moment with them before they are hurried northward under cover of night, which is when all troop trains are dispatched. To sleep in barracks means just that much less time in the company of their families, and much less comfort, too, so the thirty-nine sleep on real beds until the landlord calls them, at four-thirty in the morning. Then they leave for the barracks, crawl in a window, stretch out on their piles of straw and are ready for roll call. Last week, ten other men were enjoying the same luxury at this hotel, but their captain appeared unexpectedly one night and ordered

them off to the barracks. "To-night, my dear boys, you will sleep on the hay," he said, "or go to jail!" He smiled as he said it, and the men understood that only the command of his superior officer had caused him to go to all the hotels in Rome and round-up delinquents. The thirty-nine expect to be discovered at any time, but, as one of them said, that possibility only makes their present transgression the more enjoyable.

The whip is not cracked very often over the heads of the men who are awaiting their turn to go northward. The attitude of the officers is a tolerant one. There will be plenty of discipline later on. In the meantime, Rome belongs to the soldier lad, and he is not allowed to pay for tobacco, drinks or theatre tickets if the citizens "see him first."

The first aeroplane scare took place last night. I was walking on the Via Nazionale at ten o'clock, at which time the street is always crowded with people, when suddenly all lights were extinguished, including those in the shops and

cafés. It is impossible to describe the sensations of one walking in utter darkness among thousands of other human beings, all of them bewildered and apprehensive, whose presence one can feel but cannot see. The sky was clouded over and the thousands walked with outstretched hands, like the blind, reaching out for some object the outline of which might give an idea as to where they were. Tramcars stopped and one could hear the nervous stamping of carriage horses and the curses of their drivers. The darkness lasted only ten minutes, but it gave us an impression of what night must mean just now in Venice, which is unlighted from sunset to dawn.

We learned this morning that the lookouts stationed at Tivoli had telephoned to Rome that an aeroplane had been sighted, but so far no one has reported having seen it above Rome last night. Lookouts are stationed at all the hill towns about the city and an observation balloon floats above Monte Mario, just at the left of St. Peter's.

It is thought to be impossible for hostile aircraft to get safely over the mountains that lie between Rome and the Adriatic coast, and reports are current that if there are enemy planes near Rome they have been constructed from parts which were stored in villas which belong to Austrians or Germans.

Nobody on the streets seems to take the possibility of an air raid seriously. One Roman hails another by asking him to come to the Café Aragno, from which a good view of the destruction of the colossal Victor Emanuel monument may be had. Nevertheless, the authorities have posted a proclamation to-day instructing the citizens how to conduct themselves should the aeroplanes come. Blue globes are also being placed on all the street lights, it having been found that a particular shade of blue is inconspicuous from a great height.

In case word should come from a hill town that an aeroplane has been sighted, boy scouts and special policemen mounted on bicycles will race through the streets blowing bugles, at the

sound of which citizens are expected to take shelter within the nearest buildings, the shutters of which must be closed immediately, so that no gleams of light may escape.

From observations made a few evenings ago it was found that the only structure which stands out conspicuously from an altitude of more than two thousand feet is the newly-finished monument to Victor Emanuel, that huge, dazzling-white edifice which represents nearly twenty million lire. Not all Romans find the monument in good taste. I heard one of them say at Café Aragno the other evening that except for the litter it would make in the *Piazza Venezia*—— He didn't finish his sentence, but several men around laughingly agreed with his implication.

FESTA DELLO STATUTO

Every day one hears of the expulsion of *Tedeschi* who, living in seclusion in a remote part of the city, had believed themselves safe. The possession of blonde hair and blue eyes requires a lot of explaining, and English people are careful to place a British flag conspicuously by the side of the Italian colors that everyone carries pinned to his clothing. As my own hair is black and my skin tanned to an Italian shade, my nationality has not yet been questioned. Perhaps I look unquestionably American—at least I hope that I do. I am sure that my shoes and clothes are distinctively “United States” in appearance; and it is often by their clothing, rather than their physical traits, that Americans are distinguished from the people of other countries.

Thousands of school children, working in pairs, patrol the streets. One carries a money-box and the other a basket filled with silk poppies of the Italian colors, red, green and white. It would take a great deal of courage or meanness

to repulse a child who attempted to pin a poppy on one's coat, for the money goes to the wives and children of those soldiers without means who are in the war. Everyone gladly gives a lira or two for what is really a very handsome decoration. Seen from a distance, the people on the streets look like a field of animated poppies.

Yesterday was the *Festa dello Statuto* (Festival of the Constitution), and this morning the *Romani* must be a very tired people after their patriotic debauch. For two hours I stood in a subway crush in the *Piazza del Quirinale*, while the sun blazed remorselessly upon the hundred thousand people who crowded even the roofs of the buildings for a block around. The papers do not greatly exaggerate when they say that the piazza groaned under the weight of the patriots. There was already scarcely standing room when thirty thousand members of various social organizations arrived from their demonstration in the *Piazza del Popolo* and forced their way into the sweltering crowd. A great many women and children fainted in the crush and had to be

lifted above the sea of heads and carried on up-raised hands to a clearing between the *Palazzo Reale* and the lined-up *carabinieri* who formed a guard.

Just when the thousands were becoming impatiently bored from the long, hot waiting, a ragged boy carrying the entwined Italian and Belgian flags snatched the plumed hat from the head of a good-natured soldier of the *Bersaglieri*, placed it atop the flags and waved it above the heads of the people, who revived at the sight and shouted "*Viva l'Italia! Evviva la quadruplice alleanza!*"

Perhaps royalty had been waiting for such a dramatic moment, for a trumpet sounded and Queen Elena, her four children, Queen Margherita and the Duke of Genoa appeared on a balcony. For five minutes they bowed like state-ly mannikins, while the populace waved hats and flags and shouted their admiration. The Duke of Genoa tried to read a message from the King, who is at the front, but got no further than his sovereign's name, for the hundred thousand sent

up a cry that must have reached to the *campagna*. Queen Elena waved a handkerchief and the beautiful Margherita fluttered hers and smiled in a way that reminded me of Sembrich receiving the plaudits of her loving subjects on that famous farewell night at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Evidently Margherita is first in the hearts of the *Romani*, for they shouted even more lustily than before and kissed their hands to her.

The royal family solemnly withdrew, but the people stayed, demanding another appearance. Finally the Crown Prince came out again, a tiny figure with a rather frightened expression on his face. With him were a soldier and a sailor, in their everyday uniforms. This last pull at the sentiment of the people had full effect; the air was filled with flying hats, some more women fainted, trumpets shrilled, and men cracked their throats with shouts of "Long live Umberto! Long live the Army and the Navy!" The little prince, too bewildered to smile, cried "Long live the People!" but his boyish voice was

drowned in the blare of trumpets and the mighty clapping of a quarter million hands.

Unwearied, the *Romani* went at night to the brilliantly lighted *Piazza Colonna* to hear the band play. They clamored for the *Marcia Reale*, which had to be repeated three times. Then someone called for the *Marseillaise*, and the people of Paris themselves could not have sung with more thrilling power than did their allies in the *Piazza Colonna*.

The *Bersaglieri* called for the Garibaldi Hymn, and while thousands of singing voices drowned out the band, Nicolo Rovera, an aged Garibaldian from Palermo, was hoisted to the shoulders of two sturdy soldiers and carried in procession around the Piazza, his eyes flashing as he held the flag of Italy pressed closely against his red shirt. Nicolo Rovera will spend the rest of his days telling the good people of Palermo how the *Romani* honored him on the *Festa dello Statuto*.

The Romans always arrange at least one big joke for their festas. Last night the *Palazzo*

Chigi, from which the Austrian Ambassador departed hurriedly a fortnight ago, had on it a huge sign—D’AFFITARE (To Let).

The earthquake last January caused the statue of St. Paul on top of the Column of Marcus Aurelius in the *Piazza Colonna* to shift its position, and the Romans declared that the saint had deliberately turned his back on the Austrian Embassy.

A FORFEITED HONOR

Chevalier Rinaldi, who handles the artistic end of the Cines Company, makers of the famous *Quo Vadis* film, belongs to the *Associazione Artistica Internazionale*, which includes in its membership men of all nationalities who as patrons or creators have figured prominently in the fine arts. He told me that the Kaiser was made a member several years ago, but that the association held a special meeting the other day and with solemn formality struck his name from the list, declaring that the past year had shown him to be, not a protector but a wanton destroyer of the arts. In his place they elected D'Annunzio to membership.

It was also voted that the association recommend to the government the seizure of the beautiful *Villa Falconieri* at Frascati, belonging to the Kaiser, as well as the *Villa d'Este*, the property of Austria. The association also called the attention of the government to the fact that not only did Germany own the *Palazzo Caffarelli*,

immediately next to the *Campidoglio*, but that little by little she had also acquired many other properties in this most historic part of all Rome, lying as it does immediately above the Forum.

Most of the automobiles have already been requisitioned, and to-day there is posted on every corner in Rome a notice that all owners of motorcycles must present their machines at military headquarters, equipped with repair kits, the contents of which the notice details, not omitting even the well-filled oil can. The government agrees to pay market prices for the cycles and will in addition allow a premium for those which have been unusually well-kept.

By the side of this notice is one which regulates the prices of provisions. Anyone who extorts more than the amounts stipulated can be arrested upon complaint of the victim.

So far, there has been little apprehension regarding the food supply. Women always have done most of the work in fields and gardens, so the absence of men will have but little effect upon the cultivating and gathering of crops.



GROUP OF BERSAGLIERI

Much of the grain, however, has to be imported, and because of the scarcity of ships the price of wheat has advanced. Accordingly, "war" bread is in order. It is not good to look at, this mixture of potato, rice and wheat flours, but we are assured by the food experts that it is more wholesome than bread made from white flour only. It is a dirty gray in color and strong teeth are needed to masticate it, but the taste is delicious.

In to-day's heat came another hailstorm, which was not so bad, however, as the two storms of last week, when bits of ice the size of marbles cut faces and hands and cracked glass in the windows. The trams stopped and many women passengers dropped to their knees and prayed—not for their personal safety, but that no damage might come to the crops at this momentous time. Fortunately, most of the damage was confined to Rome. But the peasants in the country thought the last great day had come, for at eleven in the morning, the skies

were like midnight and a shrieking wind added its quota of terror.

The "newsboys" here are mostly women, lusty Amazons with resonant baritone voices that carry a great distance as their owners race along the streets shouting the latest editions.

The "*Giornale d'Italia*" most closely approaches the New York dailies in its publishing and distributing methods. It gets out several editions, and usually an "extra" at ten or eleven at night. Bulletins are posted in front of its offices in the *Palazzo Sciarra* on the Corso every few minutes, and a huge map similar to that on the "Herald" building shows the movements of the different armies. Also, like the "Herald" and the "Globe," it makes a display of presses and workmen, and there is always a large audience watching the rattling machinery and hustling printers. The hundred of women and boys scrambling for papers hot from the presses, auto-trucks rushing off the editions to distant parts of the city, the voices cheering the bulletins, the angry arguments from loiterers—all this suggests Park

Row or Times Square more than it does the City of the Coliseum.

Women also began yesterday to serve as conductors on those street cars which are owned by the municipality. They are chiefly the wives or sisters of men called to the war. Some of them are very good-looking, and it is evident that many of the male passengers have to struggle hard to prevent their susceptibility to feminine beauty from dominating the respect they feel for these brave women.

There is a girl of unknown nationality who just now is the talk of Rome, largely because of her beauty and unusual costume. My own thought is that she is an advertisement and that in a few days her portrait will appear on the billboards as star of a new moving-picture drama. She is handsome, with a graceful figure which appears to advantage in a dress made as nearly like the uniform of the *Bersaglieri* as it is possible for feminine apparel to be. Her hat is a duplicate of that worn by them. Tilted smartly, with a cascade of cock feathers over one side,

it is perhaps the most becoming hat that either man or maid could wear. Even the heavy physiognomy of some of the *contadini* takes on a certain jauntiness beneath such headgear.

This girl always comes to the Café Aragno at six o'clock, when the sidewalk tables are crowded with soldiers and citizens taking their *caffè espresso*, and whenever she appears she is followed by a crowd of admirers, to whom she pays no attention except a dazzling smile now and then at some particularly audacious compliment. As the *Bersaglieri* are the idols of Italy, brave youths held in affectionate esteem, the young woman has chosen a very effective form of *réclame*, and I predict a great success for whatever she may be advertising.

AN AUSTRIAN INVITATION

The street in front of the building occupied by the "*Giornale d'Italia*" is constantly crowded by persons interested in the war bulletins, meagre as these are. On all of the bulletins is now pasted a yellow "sticker," reading: "Italians! Be careful not to discuss in a crowd anything you may know of war plans, and if you suspect the presence of a spy, denounce him to the authorities. It is your duty to be constantly on guard."

The *Giornale* also displays in a frame one of the circulars which the Austrians shot into a camp of Italian soldiers, inviting them to desert and come across the line into Austria, where they would be given of the best to eat, drink and smoke, would be comfortably housed, and allowed full liberty, as well as spending money. The circular also gives the sums that will be paid for military equipment which the deserters may bring with them, ranging from forty lire for a gun to two thousand lire for an aeroplane. The Austrians seem to share Germany's belief in a

partnership with God, for the circular confidently states that Heaven will reward every Italian who will come over to Austria! Needless to say, this insult has not lessened the Italian fury.

I heard a story to-day of one the good-natured, democratic traits of the little Crown Prince which make him so much beloved by his people. Since the King left for the front, the Prince, who is only twelve years old, has had to represent him on many public occasions, but it has not turned his head, nor spoiled his boyishness. Accompanied by his bodyguard, he always goes to the railroad station to wish good luck to the regiments bound for the front. The other day a young Englishwoman was taken by her Italian hostess to witness the ceremony. When she saw the Crown prince, the Englishwoman, not knowing that he speaks English perfectly, called out to him, "Oh, you dear little boy, God bless you!" Her hostess gasped at the informality, but the Prince waved his sailor cap and replied, "Thank you, dear madam; God bless the English!" When he passed again on his way from

the train he carried a bouquet of roses, which he presented to the Englishwoman. The Italian lady has since told me that she trembled lest her impulsive English friend gather the little Prince up in her arms and hug him. My own opinion is that he would have enjoyed it immensely and would probably have "hugged back."

CIVILIAN ASSISTANCE

The government can allow only a small sum weekly to the families of fighting men, but this is being supplemented by money raised by various social organizations through lotteries, entertainments, and the sale of special stamps, of artistic design. The conductors of the tramways have supplies of these stamps, and all good citizens add an extra *soldo* when paying their fare.

Those people who have employment and are not liable to military service have pledged one day's wages each month to a fund for the families of the "*richiamati*," as the men on the fighting line are called.

Each district in the city has its public kitchen, where cooked food is sold at low prices. In addition, there are places where dinners are served free of charge to wives and children of the poorer soldiers. The food is donated by daughters of prosperous families and is cooked and served by them. The people of means are doing everything they can, both through money

and personal service, to lighten the burden of the families whose men are absent at the front. All class barriers are down and the whole spirit of Italy seems to be one of eager service.

Even the horses at the front are having their lottery. A society called the Blue Cross is raising money in this way to secure veterinary service for horses injured in the war. Prizes donated by charitable residents of Rome are displayed in windows of shops along the Corso, with the names of the donors attached. Among them is a wrist watch of gold and enamel, offered by "Sua Eccellenza, la Signora Page," the wife of our ambassador. The tickets cost only a lira and include admittance to the gardens of the British Embassy, where a band will play next Sunday and Lady Rodd, the ambassador's wife, will pour tea while the drawing takes place.

This morning's papers praise "the good hearts" of the American residents of Florence, who have given a large hospital for use of wounded soldiers. The announcement states that as yet it has not been found necessary to use

any of the beds. It is believed here that so far the casualty list is small, but this is only a surmise, as no lists are made public, the dead and wounded being reported direct to their families.

The bald places in the newspapers are increasing and there is much dissatisfaction with a censorship that eliminates everything that is not of the most trivial character. The editors of the Roman newspapers are particularly indignant with their censor, claiming that the papers of Florence and Milan are permitted to print news which for some unexplained reason is not allowed to appear in the Roman papers, and that because of this they are losing money, as the people ignore their home papers and subscribe to those which are printed in other cities.

The experiment of employing women conductors on the trams to replace the brothers or husbands called to the war is not proving entirely successful. Of course every country is afflicted with men who think themselves so handsome or fascinating that any woman will welcome their attentions. Italy has its share of

such persecutors and they are taking full advantage of this unusual opportunity to indulge their worst inclinations. Because the number of cars has been greatly reduced, there is now about as much comfort in travelling in them as there is in our own subway cars in the rush hours and the fair conductors are sometimes much annoyed by these "mashers," who become too affectionate under cover of the crowd. Then, too, there are young ruffians like those we sometimes have in New York on Sundays and holidays, who find it a manly sport to hamper the woman conductor in her work by refusing to pay fares, ringing the bell incessantly or by not permitting her to pass from one part of the car to another.

Last week on tram No. 16, which runs from the railroad station to St. Peter's, three of these roughs refused to pay their fares, stating that they held passes. When requested to produce them, they laughed and said they had left them at home. The woman insisted upon having the fares, but the men became so insulting and abusive that she was afraid to say anything

more, so paid the fares herself. The young men were so violent in their threats that none of the other passengers dared protest at the time, but one of them left the car and hunted up a half-dozen husky *carabinieri*, who almost killed the men in the scuffle that took place. The press and public are showing so much anger over these affronts to the dependent wives and sisters of soldiers who are fighting for their country that when these particular "toughs" are able to leave the hospital they will probably receive sentences long enough to discourage other ruffians, and perhaps even the mashers, too.

There is now a sign in all the cars, reading: "The directors are convinced that the public will be considerate and polite to the lady conductors."

THE RAG FAIR

For sake of interesting memories of other years I went to-day to the *Campo di Fiori* to seek the "Rag Fair," but alas! the woe that is upon Italy has also touched the usually festive "Field of Flowers," where in other centuries murderers used to be executed. To-day I found only vegetables being sold there. The Rag Fair, beloved of Americans, is no more, at least during the war. It is one of the many affairs that are postponed until the good-natured, money-spending *Americani* come again to Italy.

Every good American used to go to this fair, as he also went to drink at the Fountain of Trevi and cast his coin therein, that his return to Rome might be assured. This morning I saw small boys wading in the fountain, peering into the depths, in uncertain hope of finding some coins that remained from the gay and prosperous years when Rome was invaded by the Americans, all of whom are millionaires, or at least show a cheerful disregard for small sums.

I think the average tourist well knows that the Rag Fair has afforded no real bargains these last few years, but one feels a certain sense of opulence in plunging one's hands deep into buckets filled with topazes, amethysts and garnets, which at home are usually shown in modest trays holding a dozen or so. By the time the American duty is paid, the unset gems have cost quite as much as they would at a Fifth Avenue shop; but glittering jewels by bucketfuls are a novelty, and it is for thrills that we pay without questioning, the joy of buying something in a foreign land, and the opportunity to say to admiring friends, "Yes, I bought that at the Rag Fair in Rome!"

There was a time, many years ago, when the Rag Fair afforded real bargains. It was then in some respects a thieves' market, where articles dishonestly acquired had to be quickly sold for whatever price could be had. But when Italians who had been robbed turned first to this fair to seek their property, the market began to assume another character. The tradition of

"something for nothing" persists, however, to this day to a certain extent, so that in normal times the *Campo di Fiori* is crowded once a week with people who hope to find unset gems and real antiques at low prices.

One "antique" in great favor is the so-called "Dante" lamp. These lamps are bought by the hundred, exposed to the weather until well-tarnished, then carted to the Rag Fair to be sold to the gullible, who pay solid-brass prices for many pounds of lead lightly sheathed in yellow metal.

(That my prized Italian friends may not be offended at what they may consider an unfriendly criticism, I wish to state that every large city in the United States has "curiosity" shops that are miniature Rag Fairs, the only difference being that in Rome one pays less for spurious antiques than he does in New York, Philadelphia or Boston.)

There are also at the fair crests of golden thread embroidered on velvet, purporting to be from furniture and hangings which were once in the Barberini palace. But most of the celebrated

Barberini bees are probably made in Manchester, and the Dante lamps may have come from Allen Street in New York, where in the shadow of the "L" the Russians turn out brass that is solid and brass that is not.

The Rag Fair can, however, provide an hour of unflagging interest, and if an intending purchaser will content himself with unset semi-precious stones, ecclesiastical embroideries and silver articles for which no antiquity is claimed, he may, infrequently, get such things at prices somewhat lower than those charged in shops on the Corso or the Via Nazionale. At any rate, he will find much that is amusing in the transactions going on about him, and the chances are that even though subconsciously he feels that he will be fleeced he will end by buying something, if only "for the fun of it."

The war has also touched the lottery, that eternal hope of the lower classes. Tickets for a lottery of five hundred thousand lire have been on sale for several months, the prizes ranging from the big one, of two hundred thousand lire,

to those of fifty lire each, and it is safe to say that everyone in Italy has a ticket. I know one American who plunged to the extent of three lire, and he is just as much disappointed as the natives to find posted at every street corner to-day a notice that the drawing is indefinitely postponed. The government evidently realizes how much the citizens love their lottery, for the announcement is in almost plaintive terms, appealing to the patriotism of the people and saying they must believe that war alone could have compelled a postponement.

Next to this poster is one asking for popular subscriptions to a war loan, in sums of one hundred to twenty thousand lire, to be issued at 95, bear interest at $4\frac{1}{2}\%$, and be repaid within twenty-five years. All the newspapers are appealing to the citizens to respond as nobly as did the people of other warring countries. One of the journals ends all its columns with big type reading, "He who can subscribe to the war loan and will not do so is a traitor to his country."

EXIT MAXIMILIAN, HAIL COLUMBUS *

The individual cases of suffering, and not the benumbing big catastrophes, make one most keenly realize the cruelties of war. At the small hotel where I am staying is a widow who is alone in the world except for one son, only twenty-one, and frail, for whose instruction in law his mother has for three years paid the greater part of her small income. He was about to be taken into the office of a firm of lawyers here when he received his call to the front. The mother obtained a delay of a few days, during which she tried to have him retained for service in Rome, pleading his poor health as the reason. Mother and son plainly showed strain while awaiting the decision that would mean so much to them. The letter was delivered by messenger while they were at dinner one evening. We who knew the circumstances suffered with the mother as she watched the face of her boy when he

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opened the letter. She read the answer in his eyes, for we saw old age come suddenly upon her. Her face grew livid, and her shoulders bent as she received the blow.

"You are all I have in the world, and they take you from me!"

All the scenes of ruined homes, of starving peasants, of battlefields upon which lay thousands of dead and dying men have not arraigned for me those men responsible for war as did the helpless cry from that woman's heart.

But when the moment came for him to go, she smiled, and he smiled back, as is the way of mothers and sons at such times, each for the sake of the other.

The censorship is becoming increasingly severe, and nowhere else are correspondents of newspapers so hampered as they are here. A man from the "*Giornale d'Italia*" did make his way through the lines, but was made prisoner, and released only upon his signing an agreement to write nothing of what he saw or heard while in camp. He kept his promise, for his

article gives no details of men or their movements, nor the names of towns through which he passed in returning to Rome. Despite the ban upon real news, he managed, however, to make a readable page of gossip of the little things that hold much human interest.

He writes, for instance, that in the village of "X" he saw in the public square an unusually fine statue of Maximilian, which the citizens have rechristened Christopher Columbus! A less thrifty community might have destroyed the statue, but it was a real work of art and the chief decoration of their humble village, so they simply chiselled out the Austrian "Maximilian," carved in "Christoforo Colombo," hung the statue with flowers and made a festa of dance and song. What's in a name, anyway, when it comes to statues? The miscalled Antinous of the Vatican renamed "Augustus" would still be Praxiteles; and the sculptor of Maximilian-Columbus seems to have been a master, too.

This representative of the "*Giornale d'Italia*" writes that the authorities of all towns where

soldiers are encamped or where there are Austrian prisoners or wounded Italians, have orders to expel all journalists, Italian or foreign, immediately upon arrival and that although provided with papers from persons of influence in Rome he was expelled from one place after another, each time being forced to travel south, farther away from the scenes of military activity. He writes as if he were the only correspondent who has succeeded in getting beyond the lines, and suggests that all other articles but his have been written in cafés far from the scene of action. The people in Rome seem to share his belief that most of what purports to come from the front is pure fiction, and they give credence only to the dozen or so lines published daily over the signature of General Cardona, in whose sincerity they have full belief.

An old Italian friend came upon me the other day in the *Piazza Venezia* as I was reading a certain daily newspaper. "Ah!" he said; "you, too, buy the ——. You know that is the paper of which we Romans say: 'Nobody *buys* it, but

everybody *reads* it'—with the title-page turned inside," he added, smiling.

This paper daily prints three columns headed, "Against Spying," and invites letters from readers regarding experiences with persons whom they suspect of being spies. These letters, written mostly by ignorant people, serve only to keep others of the same unintelligent, unreasoning class in a state of fanatical apprehension and excitement.

From the tone of some of the letters one is led to think that perhaps this opportunity is being taken advantage of to satisfy some ancient grudges, for many of the letters are directed against native Italians. No names of persons are given, but localities are, together with physical descriptions of the suspects. Here is a sample letter:

"Yesterday, as I was walking on the Via Garibaldi, I saw an Italian girl speaking with two men who looked like Austrians. I crept up, and while pretending to look in a store window I listened. I could not distinguish the words, but

the accent was Austrian. This girl, who is perhaps a traitress, I recognized as one I had often seen in Via So-and-So. She has brown eyes and white skin. Under her right eye is a small mole, and she wears a green hat on which are white feathers. She has a bad eye and I always have mistrusted her. Should she not be denounced to the police?"

It is this same paper which raises the question whether signboards advertising products with German or Austrian names may not have a military significance, as certain advertising signs were proved to have had in France and Belgium.

The signboard particularly under suspicion just now is a huge one along the line of the railroad between Rome and Naples. It advertises a half-hundred products made by well-known Pittsburgh manufacturers of pickles and preserves, and was possibly placed in Italy to bring a smile to travellers from the United States who are accustomed to see similar signs of this company along all railroad and trolley lines in their own country.

The article states that one of these signs is also near a fort and another not far from an aeroplane station. It adds that perhaps this is only a coincidence, but concludes with saying significantly, "There are too many coincidences!"

So many persons have been justly convicted of obtaining information for which they could have no legitimate use that there is some excuse for this excess of zeal on the part of citizens and authorities, but the dangers to innocent persons at the hands of ignorant or unscrupulous ones seeking revenge for private wrongs are increasing daily, and it is gratifying to note that some of the more responsible and conservative papers are beginning to caution the people against the arousing of unjust suspicion.

FOURTH OF JULY AT THE EMBASSY

Three times I have been in Italy on the Fourth of July, and twice the four thousand miles between me and the United States have caused an indescribable feeling of remoteness and loneliness. But to-day was so different that I felt as if on American soil enjoying the cheering hospitality of some stately mansion on the James River. Ambassador Page and Mrs. Page had "open house" for all their countrymen in Rome. There were no formal invitations, but only democratic notices posted in the hotels stating that on the Fourth of July, Ambassador and Mrs. Page would welcome all Americans at the Palazzo del Drago.

Through other visits to Rome I had become accustomed to seeing business of a lowly kind conducted on the ground floors of the most magnificent palaces, so was therefore not surprised to find that the *Palazzo del Drago* sheltered not only our ambassador, but also a wine shop, a

lithographing establishment and a paint and varnish store, not to mention a moving-picture theatre.

But commerce ends on the street level. The floors above have all the grandeur that one associates with the word "*palazzo*," and the apartments occupied by Ambassador and Mrs. Page are magnificent in their furnishings. One room is entirely American in its appointments. The other rooms are stately and beautiful, but this one is something more. It is comfortable, home-like, and there the guests lingered longest, among the books brought from America, the family portraits, photographs of friends, and three old mahogany bookcases that surely were made in America, even though, as I was told, they were purchased in Rome.

A cheerful young attaché from Boston greeted the guests as if truly glad to see them. Ambassador and Mrs. Page afforded us the same sensation; and to make a hundred people feel "at home" is, I imagine, no easy matter.

There were flowers of many kinds, but American Beauty roses had the places of honor. I suppose they were grown here, but I have never seen them elsewhere in Rome.

It was not hunger that made us applaud at sight of a long table filled with good things to eat, but only appreciation of a hospitality that even in the refreshments had sought to make us feel that we were in our own homes, in our own blessed land. Who would expect to see in Rome four-storied chocolate cakes, with icing dripping luxuriously from the eaves? Or the many-layered cocoanut cakes of our childhood days? And least of all, and best to see, who could think to find, four thousand miles from home, a real, honest-to-goodness strawberry shortcake, which one could eat to the music of "My Old Kentucky Home" and "Dixie Land"? For the music of America accompanied the national refreshments, and every song of our native land, from "The Star-Spangled Banner" to "Swanee River," was played by the orchestra and sung by the guests.

That Peter Pan of Rome, the sculptor Ezekiel, who never will grow up, two-stepped alone to the Sousa "Stars and Stripes" until the dignified wife of an attaché also became a child again and joined him in the dance. Ezekiel at one time came from America, but no one seems to know just when it was. In the reminiscences of diplomats of many years ago one may read of the splendid entertainments he gave in his studio, which was then in the Baths of *Diocletian*. He is so much a part of Rome that one associates him with the other monuments and is tempted to add his name to a famous phrase and say that "as long as the sculptor Ezekiel and the Coliseum stand, just so long will Rome endure."

Personally, I needed all the happiness that the reception afforded, for earlier in the afternoon I had seen something of the effects of war. It has only been within the past week that wounded soldiers from the front have been sent here, but now they are coming almost every day. A young French girl who had been under instruction at the Red Cross headquarters had

said a cheerful good-bye to us at the hotel as she left for her first actual work among the wounded. She went away with bright eyes, a healthy color in her cheeks, and a buoyant step. When she returned in the afternoon her face was drawn and white, her voice trembled and her eyes were filled with terror. "*Mon Dieu!*" she said; "if only those boys would not *scream* so!"

The operations, of course, are performed under anesthetics, but nothing can be done to lessen the agony when it is necessary later to repack the gaping wounds with gauze. The nurse told us that from a window she had seen passers-by cover their ears and run away, unable to stand the sound of those screams that reached to the street.

As the war lengthens, the poor mutilated boys in their early twenties will come in greater numbers, and it is inevitable that some of their suffering will be communicated to us who are non-combatants. A city cannot shelter hundreds of men who toss and scream in agony without most of its inhabitants feeling depressed. It will not

be the result of morbid imaginations; the wireless currents of the air carry sorrow as they carry joy, and there is no known way by which mankind can insulate themselves from the sufferings of their brothers in times like these.

THE PANAMA CANAL IN ROME

I saw at a cinematograph the other evening a series of films showing the construction of the Panama Canal. It was a revelation even to me, who as an American am accustomed to seeing machines that in five minutes will do what a hundred men could not do in an hour. The Italian audience sat absolutely quiet, and when five hundred Italians sit in silence it means they are confronted by something that seems to them supernatural. I myself quite understood why the girl in front of me should shrink as out of the air there came a huge bird of steel that swooped down upon a hillside, opened its jaws, took a three thousand ton bite, swooped lower still, almost into the faces of us who sat in the front rows, and disgorged that mass of earth and gravel.

Judging from the films, apparently men at Panama counted for nothing more than intelligences that pressed a button here or a lever there to bring from its lair some monster of steel that

carried small mountains from one place to another, wrenched mighty trees from the earth with one twist of their riveted tentacles or lifted bridges and trestles as if they were toys of tin.

The preceding films of love, hate and vendetta had brought forth tears, curses and hisses from the audience, but before these *colossi* of iron and steel with which the wonderful *Americani* win peaceful battles the impressionable Italians sat stupefied.

But my neighbors at an outdoor café on the Via Veneto an hour later showed no interest whatever when a Chinese woman in gorgeous robes of crimson and gold stumbled by on her tiny "bound" feet, offering for sale in good Italian rosettes of green, red and white for the benefit of the Red Cross. Then it was I who marvelled, stared and sat silent. Had such a figure appeared on Fifth Avenue, a crowd would have collected. But a high-class Chinese woman, speaking good Italian, and selling the national colors here in Rome, seemed nothing strange to the natives, while I rubbed my eyes to convince

myself that I was not dreaming or at a Gilbert and Sullivan revival.

Women are now replacing men as street-sweepers here. They receive forty cents a day for ten hours' work. Four cents an hour does not seem an excessive wage. Sweeping a street apparently demands a skill different from that required to sweep a house, for the work is not so well done by the women as it was by the men.

A CABLE MESSAGE

I cabled to New York to-day for money, but although I am duly registered at the "Questura" and have a printed "permesso" from the police authorities to remain in Rome, the cable, although not in code, was not forwarded until further inquiries regarding my respectability were made. Perhaps the very simplicity of the wording was suspicious, or it may have been the fact that I paid three lira for the unnecessary "please" with which I began the request. The clerk at the banking-house typewrote the message and took it to the cable office. I supposed it had gone forward, but several hours later a uniformed official from the post-office department, which controls the cable, came to look me up at the hotel. He questioned the landlord regarding my actions while in his house and then came to judge for himself whether or not I looked like a person who would send a dangerous message out of Italy.

A large American flag beautifies a wall of my

room, and in the frame of the mirror happened to be the cards of a half-dozen Romans whom I met when last here and with whom I still maintain friendly relations. The flag came in for admiration and the cards were carefully read. The lining of my hat also appeared to be of interest. Nothing could be less provocative of distrust than the name and address of a Philadelphia hatter, I am sure, so perhaps that is why I myself came in for only a very kindly scrutiny. I thought I detected even a trace of friendly sympathy as the gentleman in brass buttons glanced at the very old and very ragged bathrobe which I wore for the sake of coolness. At any rate, he shook hands while I cried "*Viva l'Italia!*" and went away apparently satisfied. So I assume that my quite usual and harmless request for a remittance will be sent forward. If it isn't, I shall probably appear at the back door of the American Embassy in a few days to request something to eat, which would be a distinctly humiliating experience, considering that ten days ago I went in at the front door and shared in the

Fourth of July hospitality offered by Ambassador and Mrs. Page to their fellow-countrymen in Rome.

The times are not normal, so one is prepared for all sorts of experiences. Especially must all of us *stranieri* be ready to meet distrust and suspicion of our presence in Italy just now.

Late last night on the Corso I came upon a growling crowd of men and boys who had hold of a man whom they suspected of being a *Tedesco*, and therefore possibly a spy. Things looked dangerous for him for a few minutes and he was white with alarm, for the frenzy of suspicious Italians is no jest. He kept his head, however, and succeeded in persuading the more reasonable men that he was Swiss and not Austrian or German. They let him go. He rushed into the house and made the mistake of banging the door in the faces of two men who had followed him from out the crowd. One of them shouted that suspects always declare that they are Swiss, and the newly-inflamed mob rushed for the heavy oak door, kicking and

pounding it and daring the man to come out. He did not respond to their alluring invitation and the zealous citizens finally went away. I think he may depend upon being summoned to the "Questura" to-morrow.

I remained throughout the squabble, but not without a certain thrill of danger, for had I been addressed by anyone in the mob, my accent would have betrayed me as a foreigner and I should have had a few bad minutes myself while my passport and other papers were being handled by the patriots. No one can question that there is need for apprehension of spies at this time, and I think I could easily have forgiven my inquisitors.

It is being constantly urged upon citizens by the newspapers and by various protective associations that duty demands that they be always on the lookout for strangers whose presence may be a menace to Italy. On the walls of many houses, on a window in front of the "*Giornale d'Italia*" office, and even on the mail-boxes at the main post-office, are red, white and green

“pasters” of the Committee for Internal Defence, warning Italians not to speak of military operations in public places and advising them to be vigilant in locating and denouncing spies. The “paster” also recommends that citizens avoid all unnecessary expenditures and that they give to needy families of soldiers the money which they might be tempted to spend on luxuries.

Last week a mob destroyed the shops of three persons with foreign names who were reported to be “*antipatico*” to Italy. They also visited the shop of a Roman barber who had married a German woman. He is at the front, but his wife was running the business. A creditor with a bill had been told by the woman that she was paying no debts in war time. During the argument that followed, the woman was foolish enough to say some nasty things about Italians. She even went so far as to boast that within a year the Germans would be in Rome and that then the Italians would be kept in their proper places. Her remarks were circulated and that night a mob wrecked the shop and probably

would have damaged her, too, had they been able to find her.

The government does not countenance demonstrations of this kind, but demands that investigations and punishments be conducted by the proper authorities. Accordingly, the leaders of these self-elected avengers have been sentenced to prison for several months and have in addition been required to pay heavy fines.

Yesterday there was a special service in the synagogue here to celebrate the going to the front of the rabbis who wish to be near the young Hebrews who have volunteered under the Italian colors. There are also eighteen hundred Catholic priests and monks on the fighting line.

A LOTTERY AT THE QUIRINAL*

Probably never before in Italy have the members of the royal family had such familiar intercourse with the people as at the lottery for the benefit of the Red Cross, which ended yesterday in the garden of the *Quirinal*. The fourteen-year-old Princess Yolanda conceived the project and recruited from the leading families in Rome a hundred young girls to assist her. It was entirely a youthful affair, conducted by girls and boys of from ten to eighteen years of age.

The "committee of one hundred," made up of the prettiest girls in Rome, requisitioned the few automobiles not already taken by the military authorities and from the shops of tradesmen and the studios of artists and sculptors they carried off more than fifty thousand donations, ranging from a stuffed parrot to a life-sized reproduction of the Venus of the Capitol.

The girls from the biggest orphanage in Rome were asked to assist and the *Giovani Esploratori* (Boy Scouts) and the *Giovani Esploratrice*

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(Girl Scouts) were enlisted to sell tickets, do police duty, and form a bodyguard for Prince Umberto and his sisters Yolanda and Mafalda whenever they came to do their share of the work. For the Prince and the two Princesses also did their stunts for an hour twice a day. The little twelve-year-old Prince, dressed as a sailor, went about the first day with a tray suspended from his neck, selling postcards, while Yolanda and Mafalda peddled flowers. The Queen and the Queen Dowager Margherita accompanied them.

The first attempt to fraternize with the populace was not a success, or, rather, was too much of a success, for the royal family were almost suffocated by the affection of the people. No sooner did they appear in the courtyard of the palace than some 50,000 persons rushed toward them, fighting for an opportunity to buy postcards and flowers. It was a new experience for the three youngsters, and they seemed rather dismayed at first at the tumult. The Boy Scouts formed a square about the Prince, and the Girl

Scouts did the same for the Princesses, but the crowd broke through the barrier made by the wooden staffs of the Scouts and pressed so closely around the Prince and his sisters that for a time it looked as if they might be trampled under foot.

The *carabinieri* fought their way into the mob and finally cleared a breathing space for the three children, from whose faces the perspiration streamed in a quite plebeian way, for the hottest of suns was also assisting at the spectacle. The Queen and the Queen Dowager looked more than a little alarmed, but by this time the children were frankly amused and delighted by the excitement, notwithstanding their discomfort. In a few minutes the Prince had sold his postcard photographs and the tray was heaped so high with banknotes that one could only see his vivacious black eyes laughing above them. A Boy Scout arrived with more cards and a big basket, into which he swept the pile of money.

The Prince handed over the postcards himself to all purchasers and said "Grazia" so sweetly

that one did not have the heart to ask for change. An old Italian gentleman bought the first postcard and paid two thousand lire for it. A certain young American got the second one (for ten lire), and he is still putting arnica on the bruises he acquired in that mob of fifty thousand enthusiastic Italians.

The orphan girls had charge of the revolving wire cages that held the tiny paper rolls for the drawing, and each girl had a sturdy Boy Scout cavalier to look after her. The first two days it cost a lira to draw for a prize, but the price declined until on the last day one could draw four times for that sum. If one was fortunate, he drew a slip of paper with only a number on it. If he lost, the slip bore the printed words "Pro Croce Rossa," to remind him that what was his loss was the gain of a worthy cause.

People of all conditions availed themselves of this opportunity to see at close range their Queen and her children, as well as the always beloved Queen Margherita, whose hair is now snow white. Twice daily, the royal family attended,



CROWN PRINCE WITH BOY SCOUTS

for they considered themselves as having invited the people of Rome to the palace, and for the hosts not to appear would have been a breach of hospitality.

Side by side with the richly dressed men and women of title were those of the lowest classes, even some humble street sweepers with bulging eyes, who had come in their working clothes. *Marchese*, *Conte* or *Giovanni* the porter—all could command the services of the attendants, who were not domestics of the royal household, but the sons and daughters of the aristocracy, who, during the week that the lottery lasted, toiled cheerfully for seven hours a day in a heat like that of the furnace room of a steamer. For the sun seemed at its malicious worst, and although the lottery was advertised as being in the gardens of the *Quirinal* it was really held in a huge courtyard of the palace, and there was no shade whatever. There were half a dozen apartments where the prizes were displayed, but only those who had won were permitted to enter for a time sufficient to get what they had drawn.

The young American with the bruises won twenty-five prizes, ranging from a toy dog on wheels to a Japanese vase, and including a very "cute" knitted dress with white ribbons for a six months' old baby!

"*E maritato, Lei?*" (Are you married?) asked the Girl Scout who handed over the little dress.

"*No, Signorina; sono un baccelliere.*" (No, I am a bachelor), he replied, and for five minutes there was much chaffing of the young American who had won a baby's dress.

"Good-bye, Signor Americano," one girl called out. "Perhaps the little dress will bring you a pretty wife and—!"

"*Spero!*" (I hope so!) retorted the *baccelliere* as he hurried away, somewhat embarrassed.

After the first day the Queen and her children did not submit themselves to the too-ardent attentions of the crowd, but spent their two hours a day back of one of the booths where refreshments were sold. The Prince sold his postcard photographs and Yolanda and Mafalda drew tickets for those who asked them to do so. It

was noticed that every slip of paper the Princesses handed out called for a prize, so I fancy there were no blanks in the basket over which they presided. Perhaps it would not be exactly "royal" for a Princess to bring anything but good fortune to her suppliants.

The first day the Boy Scouts did succeed in beating back the crowd long enough to permit the taking of the photograph showing the Prince with his basket of postcards.

What most endears Queen Elena and her children to the people is their simplicity. One thinks of the Queen as being first of all a good mother, a gentle-bred, modest and efficient lady who has paid much attention to "the business of being a woman." The Prince is an unaffected little chap with a smile that could only come from an unspoiled nature. He is first of all a boy, and after that a Prince, but always more boy than Prince and with a healthy boy's interest in all that concerns other boys, especially the Boy Scouts, who idolize him. On the last day of the lottery he appeared in his Boy Scouts' uniform,

and I thought the people would never cease shouting their joy at the sight.

Never has there been a more wholesome, hopeful happening for the present youth of Italy than this scout movement. It touches all classes, from the sons and daughters of the nobility down (or up) to the children of the man who earns five lire a day. With its drills and exercises, its commitment to temperance in all things, and its pledge to public service, it is affording to the present generation a sound, healthy employment of energy and is teaching ethics in a new and more interesting way.

This lottery gave the first big opportunity for the Boy and Girl Scouts to show what they could do, and the success which they made through their tireless industry has destroyed the last criticism of some Italians of the old school who, having no gift of organization themselves, have regarded the Boy Scout movement as but a fad, of doubtful use in the present and doomed to early extinction, because of a Latin absence of co-operative spirit.

Italy is a wine-drinking country, and wine and vermouth are part of every public entertainment. At the lottery there were half a dozen booths where a light vermouth was sold, but no Boy Scout would volunteer for this service, which had to be performed by liveried employees of the palace.

Apropos of the human qualities of the royal children, they say that one day at luncheon the Queen had occasion to reprove the ten-year-old Princess Mafalda for some infraction of table etiquette.

“Mafalda, why don’t you be nice, and eat as your sister Yolanda does?”

“Oh!” sniffed Mafalda, “Yolanda is always trying to make us believe she is a real lady!”

The Romans say it is the Queen’s favorite story.

AT CAFFE GAMBRINUS FLORENCE

The orchestra still plays in its air-hung balcony at *Caffe Gambrinus* and the sidewalk tables are crowded as ever they were, but now it is the middle-aged fathers and mothers who sit where their handsome and intelligent sons used to meet to discuss the sociological and political problems with which the Florentines are always wrestling. There they sit, these fathers and mothers, their thoughts upon Gaetano or Cosimo, who are sleeping in mud-stained clothes somewhere in the North.

Sometimes "mother" will see some other woman's soldier boy standing in the arcade listening wistfully to the music, his thoughts back in the little hill town from which he was summoned to Florence to join his regiment. She speaks to "father," who beckons the boy to their table. Father orders *granita di caffè con panna—con doppia panna*, and mother commands a tray of pastry. They compete in kindness to him for the

sake of their own boys up there in the mountains around Gorizia, and give him many loving messages, for who knows that the fortunes of war may not sometime place him in a trench next to their own dear Gaetano and Cosimo?

The nervous tension here regarding the presence of spies is greater even than that in Rome. Several Austrian men have been discovered dressed as women, and this fact was responsible for what came close to being a distressing humiliation for one innocent foreigner. Some Florentines attending service in the Duomo noticed that a person in woman's garb had unusually large feet. Immediately it was whispered about that it was a man in disguise. When the suspect left the Duomo, the entire congregation followed, and were joined by other people in the streets. The crowd began to press closely around the frightened "spy," muttering angrily. They were about to tear the clothes from off the supposed Austrian, when the *carabinieri* arrived and hurried "him" off to the *Questura*, where it was found that "he" was a friendly English woman afflicted with feet

so large that she had to wear shoes of masculine dimensions. The woman told the reporters afterwards that she hadn't minded being arrested half so much as she did the fact that the size of her feet would probably be advertised throughout Europe!

PRO FAMIGLIE DEI RICHIAMATI

"Pro famiglie dei Richiamati"—"For the families of the summoned." These are the magic words, the sometimes tragic words, that now pull at the heart and loosen the purse strings. We must all keep them before us while the war lasts, both here in Italy and in America, where at 203 Broadway, in New York City, is the Committee for Italian Relief that collects wool and surgical supplies for the Red Cross and money and provisions for the needy families of the men who are fighting.

The Italians and the Americans in Florence are giving freely of their time and money. Every week there is some concert or theatrical entertainment for charitable purposes to which it is considered a duty to subscribe. Last night there was a *grande concerto* at the Politeama, which holds about five thousand people. Every seat and all available standing room was occupied from nine o'clock in the evening until one in the morning by an audience that paid nearly thirty

thousand lire to help the families of the "*richiamati*" and give a good time to two hundred wounded soldiers and a thousand other well ones who will go to the front within a day or so.

The "*feriti*" were brought from the hospital in motor ambulances, and there was a dramatic five minutes as they came into the theatre. Many of them had to be carried to the seats reserved for them in the front rows, while others hobbled painfully along on crutches. Some had shaved heads wrapped in bandages, and most of them carried an arm or a hand in a sling. As they limped in, the audience jumped to its feet and cheered as only an Italian audience can cheer, while from balconies, galleries and boxes came a shower of flowers that fell about the wounded and covered the floor with a beautiful, fragrant carpet. It was becoming that the City of Flowers should show its appreciation in this way, and nothing could have been more impressive than that five-minute rain of roses, asters and the brilliant yellow ginestra.

The kindness of it all was too much for a few

of the younger men, some of them not more than eighteen. In their weakened condition, the excitement was more unnerving than a battle would have been, and they cried like little children who had strayed far from home and were bewildered by strange scenes. For a strange affair it was to most of those simple-minded country boys, not one of whom was more than twenty years of age. The officers who accompanied them were tender with them, as only strong men dare to be, and their conduct is representative of the relations between all officers and men of the Italian army. It is a matter of common knowledge that the feeling between officers and men in this present war is that of devoted brothers, and there have been unparalleled acts of heroism by soldiers who have fought like demons to recover the wounded or dead body of some beloved captain or lieutenant.

Between the musical numbers, a half hundred beautiful girls served ice-cream, cakes and cigarettes to the wounded, and a dozen children pinned roses upon their coats. Those boys who

were unable to use their hands were fed by the girls, who also lighted the cigarettes for the helpless ones, and twice I saw a fair, pitying hand rest lightly for a moment on the head of a child of eighteen whose right arm had been amputated.

A balcony had been reserved for a thousand soldiers who are here awaiting their transportation to the front. No one showered them with flowers, and it would be interesting to know what their thoughts were as they looked upon their maimed and disfigured fellow-men sitting below them. Apparently they were undismayed at sight of what may be in store for all of them, for no one in the theatre shouted more joyfully than they as the orchestra struck up the national air.

But at least they can count upon receiving just as much in the way of kindness and gratitude under like conditions, for the great sentiment throughout Italy is to serve those who have fought and to lighten as much as possible the sorrow and need of the families they leave behind them.

I am leaving Italy shortly, and the impression I take with me is of a noble people who with the calmness of great strength are united in a struggle from which they will emerge proud of the sacrifices that brought freedom to their brothers and sisters in the Trentino.

Sempre avanti Italia!

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